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# Settlement Opportunities

ON

## Improved and Unimproved Lands

**VEGREVILLE DISTRICT**

PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

CANADA

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Vegreville, Alberta.

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THIS pamphlet describes settlement opportunities on raw and undeveloped lands as well as improved properties in the Prairie Provinces of Canada. It has been compiled from information derived from literature published by the Soldier Settlement Board of Canada.

The Immigration Committee of the Vegreville Board of Trade will be pleased to place its service at the disposal of any incoming settlers, and will welcome inquiries from prospective settlers.

## VEGREVILLE DISTRICT

### Location and Area

The district described in this memorandum lies midway between Edmonton and Lloydminster on the main line of the Canadian National Railway. The central or principal town from which this district is served is Vegreville, with a population of close to 2,000, situated approximately seventy-five miles east of the city of Edmonton. The area comprises all the lands in ranges ten to nineteen west of the 4th meridian in the province of Alberta and extends from 15 miles south and 30 miles north of the main line of the Canadian National Railway.

Contained in this area are approximately 200,000 acres of excellent virgin land which is still unoccupied and suitable for immediate settlement and will make over 600 well balanced farms and provide homes for that number of families. All of these farms are surveyed and good roads are open into them. In addition there are several parcels of land suitable for farming which are partly cultivated, fenced etc., which are immediately available for purchase from distant owners. These will make available 250 additional farms or a total of 850 farm units in a well established productive area.

### Topographical and Other Features

The area generally is slightly rolling, mostly open, with beautiful park land scattered throughout, dotted with several small lakes. There are numerous creeks which, with the Vermilion River, a tributary of the Saskatchewan River, afford excellent drainage and abundant water supply. The northern portion is rolling park land, practically all arable. The central portion is more open with the same ratio of arable land. The southern part is practically all open with scattered poplar and willow bluffs throughout, mostly arable but having a high percentage of hay and pasture land and consequently considered more suitable for dairy farming.

The area throughout is approximately fifty per cent open land and free from scrub or timber, twenty per cent hay lands and the remaining thirty per cent scrub or bush lands that could be cleared and made ready for cultivation at an average cost of from seven to ten dollars per acre. Although mostly open there is hardly a farming unit that does not have a considerable amount of brush or small timber to provide shelter for buildings, fuel, fence posts, etc.

The soil varies highly, the eastern portion being a black sandy loam with a clay subsoil and the remainder being entirely a rich black loam from six to eight-

een inches in depth on a good clay subsoil capable of retaining moisture to a depth of three to four feet. In this area there is some stone but not sufficient to retard cultivation. Good water is easily obtainable in a number of places from ever flowing springs, and by digging or drilling from fifteen to one hundred feet the supply is usually abundant.

### **Climatic Conditions and General Productivity**

The annual precipitation is fairly equal throughout; the presence of a large lake in the eastern portion has a tendency to draw additional precipitation on the lighter soil in the form of summer showers which prevail throughout the crop growing period. Where the soil is heavier and does not therefore require so much moisture the rainfall is always sufficient to insure good crops. As previously stated there is good natural drainage, and excessive moisture does not lie on the land for a long period. The general precipitation covering a period of twenty-five years has insured good crops over all that period and the general productiveness of both crops and livestock are attributable in no small degree to this pleasing but natural feature.

This area does not have extreme weather conditions and being at an altitude of over two thousand feet makes it healthy and liveable for both man and beast. As the years proceed and more cultivation is apparent, the cold periods during the winter months are becoming more rare. The sheltered nature of the country with its bluffs and trees, abundance of feed and water makes it an ideal mixed farming area. Fuel is obtainable for the cutting in most parts and in addition there are various coal mines scattered throughout the area where coal can be obtained at a small cost.

### **Early Settlement, Nationality and Standing of Settlers**

The first settlers came into the district by trail from Edmonton and Wetaskiwin twenty to twenty-five years ago. They were mostly English-speaking Canadians and were followed by a number of "Barr Colonists"; later with the construction of the Canadian National Railway came quite a number of French-Canadians, Americans and Scandinavians, the central point being named after Father Vegreville. On the northern fringe of this area there is a small settlement of Ruthenians who are rapidly becoming naturalized and the younger generation, after attending our schools, take an active part in all national affairs.

Generally speaking, the settlement in this area is English-speaking, drawn from Eastern Canada, the States and the northern parts of the British Isles. That these farmers have been successful is demonstrated by the homelike appearance of their farms, their substantial buildings, many with such modern

improvements as electrically lighted houses and barns, plumbing, etc., and last but not least, by the healthy and intelligent appearance of their families. These farmers are well organized and have substantial interests in their own co-operative marketing system and are generally to be found holding responsible offices for the welfare of the community.

#### Sources of Revenue

The principal cash field crop is wheat, supplemented by oats and barley, the average yield during the past five years being: Wheat, twenty-two bushels; oats, fifty bushels, and barley, thirty bushels per acre. The average farmer carries: Six horses, ten milch cows, ten head of beef cattle, thirty hogs (Berkshire and Yorkshire type predominating) and from sixty to seventy-five poultry. There are a few sheep but generally speaking, only sufficient for the farmers' own use and local consumption.

Owing to the district being well settled, free range is not as plentiful as in former years and the straight beef type of cattle has been gradually replaced, the dual purpose Shorthorn breed predominating with increasing numbers of straight milch strains, such as Friesian, Ayrshires and Jersey cows.

The marketing of cream, beef cattle, hogs, eggs and poultry constitute the chief revenue aside from field crops. Practically every farmer is in the position to provide subsistence for himself and family and pay general running expenses from the sale of cream, butter, eggs and poultry. Many augment their incomes by clearing and breaking land for other farmers who are in a position to pay for this extra work. A number find remunerative employment in the fall and winter by hauling grain to market.

#### Market Facilities and General Development

Vegreville, the hub of this fertile area, is a town of approximately 2,000 inhabitants and contains marketing facilities for practically every product raised on the farm. There are seven grain elevators with a storage capacity of 500,000 bushels.

There is an up-to-date flour mill in the town which runs night and day and where the local farmer can get flour made from his own hard wheat. There is also an up-to-date creamery. In addition there is a sash and door factory where all classes of interior woodwork are manufactured, including windows, doors and store fittings.

The town has two banks, two large-sized hotels, a number of boarding houses, and the mercantile business is well represented in all lines. There are six different stockyards with local buyers at each who ship cattle and hogs regularly to Edmonton, a city of sixty-five thousand inhabitants. In Edmonton there are large creameries, egg and poultry plants and three large meat-packing plants, all of which provide ex-

cellent marketing facilities for all produce raised in this fertile area.

It is worthy of note that the town of Vegreville is the largest grain shipping point in the Dominion of Canada not including terminal ports.

To the east of Vegreville and situated approximately nine miles apart are the towns of Lavoy, Ranfurly, Innisfree and Minburn, all of which have from two to four grain elevators with capacity of from twenty-five to thirty thousand bushels each. Immediately west of Vegreville and situated approximately nine miles apart are the towns of Mundare, Chipman and Lamont. These towns also have ample storage capacity and furnish a local market for all grain and produce raised. The district is well served with graded and well maintained roadways, practically all of the towns being on the highway leading to the principal cities in Canada and the pleasure resorts in the mountains and the Pacific Coast. Rural telephones are established in every section of this district and it is possible for every farmer to be connected with the local exchange and from there obtain communication with friends at distant points.

Schools are well established everywhere and are easily accessible from any point. There is a High School in Vegreville and a College at Mundare. There are two fully equipped modern hospitals at Vegreville and one at Lamont.

#### **Price of Unimproved Lands**

The present-day values placed on these lands range from eight to twenty-five dollars per acre according to location, arable acreage and character of soil. The terms of sale are usually twenty per cent. cash and balance in ten equal annual instalments. These prices are subject to reduction of from ten to twenty per cent. for all cash.

#### **Social Advantages**

Vegreville has seven churches where practically every denomination is represented. The majority of settlers in this area, however, are Protestants with quite a number of the Roman Catholic faith.

There are many opportunities for social intercourse and settlers take full advantage of dances and musical and literary entertainments in the winter months and the athletic tournaments and games held in the summer. Agricultural fairs are held in nearly all of the towns on different dates in the fall of the year and seed and poultry fairs are held in a number of the towns during the winter months.

Birch Lake lies within easy reach of any point in this district. It is a noted summer resort with facilities for both boating and bathing and in addition there is an up-to-date dancing pavillion situated at this point.

In the fall and during the open season the lakes and creeks are a veritable sportman's paradise abounding with wild duck and geese. The district also affords excellent shooting in the way of partridge, prairie chicken and grouse.

#### Experiences of Early Settlers

J. J. Stanton, one of Vegreville's early settlers, relating his experience, said:-

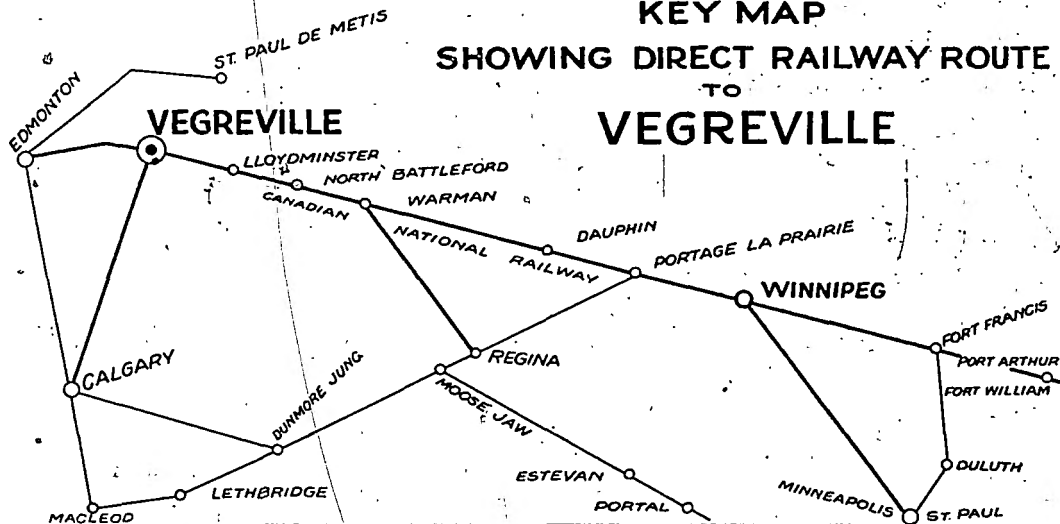
"I came to Vegreville in the spring of 1901 and took up the homestead which I still own. On the 12th of April of that year we commenced to break some land and put in oats for feed, also sowed some potatoes and grew one of the best crops, particularly of potatoes, that we have ever grown. At that time this country was a vast prairie with hardly any of it located. The nearest railway station was Edmonton and to make that trip took a whole week, so you can plainly see that you could not get to town every day. But times soon changed, immigration began to come and with the people we soon got a railroad and we have now all the conveniences that we need. In the years that I have been here we have had no complete crop failures and I do not think that you could get any better place to go in for mixed farming than this particular district. We can grow anything here that you can grow in any part of Alberta and we have as good a quality of soil as there is in any part of the province.

"I came here practically without any capital and anything I have at the present time I made it here and if I were a young man and wanted to start I would not pass up this particular district for any other that I know of. I have always been able to make a good living and I am satisfied that if I cared to sell out I could do so at a good profit, at least I have made good wages every day I have been here. I have six hundred and forty acres of land which I own. Both my house and barn are modern throughout and my farm is as a whole well stocked."

Willis Cole, Vegreville:-

"I came to Canada twenty-two years ago and homesteaded in the Vegreville district before the railway and freighted in from Edmonton eighty miles by road. When I came I had five hundred dollars in cash, four horses, a few household effects and a wagon. I now own six hundred and forty acres, well improved with fully modern house and barn, both electrically lighted. My wheat average for the last ten years has been thirty-five bushels per acre. I own forty-five horses, sixty-five head of cattle, thirty hogs and one hundred poultry. In my opinion this is an excellent mixed farming district and I have no doubt but that any man can make a home and permanent success as I have done by applying himself to the farming business."

KEY MAP  
SHOWING DIRECT RAILWAY ROUTE  
TO  
VEGREVILLE



OBSERVER PRINT, VEGREVILLE